

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

1-20 (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) A multi-layer dielectric layer over a substrate for use in dual-damascene applications, comprising:

a barrier layer disposed over the substrate[[]], and
an inter-metal dielectric structure, the inter-metal dielectric structure consisting
of:

_____ i) _____ an inorganic dielectric layer disposed over the barrier layer, the inorganic dielectric layer having a dielectric constant of about 4; and

_____ ii) _____ a low dielectric constant layer disposed directly over and in direct contact with the inorganic dielectric layer;

wherein the low dielectric constant layer is configured to receive metallization line trenches to define a metallization line layer and the inorganic dielectric layer is configured to receive vias during a dual-damascene process.

22. (Original) A multi-layer dielectric layer over a substrate for use in dual-damascene applications as recited in claim 21, wherein the barrier layer is one of a silicon nitride layer and a silicon carbide layer.